



NEWSLINE



July 2021

Advanced Meter Benefits

Itasca-Mantrap has made a significant investment in our infrastructure by purchasing a new advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) system. Modernizing our equipment and communication capabilities is essential to maintaining the quality and service our members have come to expect. We are investing in new equipment, including advanced meters. The new meters will help us respond more quickly to outages, resulting in shorter restoration times. They will also provide better tracking of momentary outages, helping us to address your power concerns. The meters will give you the information you need to use energy wisely. Itasca-Mantrap plans to begin installing AMI equipment in the fall of 2021.

AMI System Benefits:



Improved Reliability. Two-way communication with the AMI meters will enhance Itasca-Mantrap's outage management system by narrowing the location of outages more quickly.



Improved Power Quality. The AMI system will report variances in voltage and other line conditions that will help Itasca-Mantrap maintain a more reliable power distribution system.



Improved Member Service. The AMI system will allow Itasca-Mantrap to offer more timely information regarding their energy consumption, allowing members to make wise decisions about how they use energy.



Improved Internal Business Processes. The new AMI system will allow Itasca-Mantrap to refine and manage the internal engineering portion of our business, such as line loss, transformer loading, voltage readings, etc.

WHETHER TEMPS RISE OR FALL, YOUR ENERGY BILL WILL STAY COOL.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS UP TO \$2,000 REBATE WHEN YOU INSTALL A QUALIFYING ENERGY-SAVING AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP!

Air Source Heat Pump	Promo Rebate
≥ 8.2 HSPF	\$1,000
≥ 9.0 HSPF	\$2,000
Ductless Air Source Heat Pump	Promo Rebate
≥ 9.0 HSPF	\$450



Air source heat pumps provide **home cooling and supplemental heating, using 72% less electricity** than conventional air conditioners and furnaces. Get up to a \$2,000 rebate when you install one.

Limited funds are available and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Rebate amounts are subject to change without notice. Installed centrally ducted ASHPs must be separately metered & controlled and must be installed by a participating quality installation contractor to qualify for rebate.



CEO Update - By Christine Fox, President-CEO

It has been several months since I have written about the Itasca-Mantrap strategic plan. We have made great progress.

The largest project in our strategic plan

is to upgrade our infrastructure. As you may recall from previous articles or annual meetings our current metering system is now obsolete. We can no longer purchase new meters for our current system (not to worry, we did look ahead and purchased enough inventory to get us by) and soon the support for our system will no longer be available. This made it necessary for us to invest in a new **Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)**. In 2025, Great River Energy, our power supplier, will no longer provide load management infrastructure, making it necessary for Itasca-Mantrap to invest in a new **Load Management system (LM)**. Additionally, we have never had a system for easily validating and analyzing our metering data. Seeing how Itasca-Mantrap could better serve our members by using the data from the meters, we decided to invest in a new **Meter Data Management Software (MDMS)**. These three investments make up our very large **Advanced Grid Infrastructure (AGI)** project.

With the help of our engineering consultants (Star Energy Services LLC) we

put together a Request for Proposal (RFP) which outlined the parameters of what we were looking for in a new AMI/LM system and included a list of "must-haves" and "nice-to-haves". We sent this RFP to vendors who work well with cooperatives and have systems within Minnesota. We received numerous proposals and selected our top three for demonstrations. We quickly narrowed the selection down to two. From there, we put together a decision-making matrix which evaluated the vendors based on their differences. Each feature was weighted in terms of importance to Itasca-Mantrap and then given a score based on how well that feature met our needs. This weighted score was used as one criterion in the selection process. Also, each person on the AGI team was queried as to which system they preferred and why. These votes were also weighted based on how much the individual would be using the system and their operational experience. After all this subjective and objective data was assimilated, we chose Tantalus as our AMI and LM partner. We then selected the National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) as our MDMS partner. Since MDMS will integrate with our billing system, and we use NISC for our billing system, NISC was the obvious choice. And the price was right too!


So as of today, we have selected our vendors, have negotiated our contracts, have issued POs for the systems, have had several meetings with the vendors, and have started to receive hardware.

One of the first steps is the deployment of the hardware (collectors and repeaters). This hardware will be used to securely capture meter data over a radio frequency (RF) wave and transmit it to a server via a cellular signal.

Once the repeaters and collectors are hung on our poles, we will begin swapping out our members' meters. We anticipate the full deployment step will take around 18 months. We started this process last August and are almost a full year into it. We are certainly eager to start the deployment phase.

Very soon, Itasca-Mantrap and our members will be able to enjoy the many benefits that this new AGI system has to offer. See the first page of this newsletter for some benefits of the AMI portion of the project and stay tuned to next month's newsletter where I will expound on these benefits and those of the LM and MDMS portions. I know it will be difficult to wait for an entire month for a technical article about the benefits of an AGI system (ha ha). But seriously, please read the August newsletter. I will try to explain the benefits in a less technical way, while portraying what we see as the next step into our future.

So, until then, thank you for allowing me to serve you.



BASEBALL CLINIC

FREE

When: Friday, July 16

Session 1: 2:00 PM | Session 2: 3:30 PM

Where: Century Baseball Fields

Who: Boys & girls ages 6-12 years old

How to Sign Up: Register online at www.playballmn.com.

Follow Itasca-Mantrap on Facebook, Twitter, and our website to view the latest updates regarding this event.



Tree Planting in Honor of Arbor Day



Itasca-Mantrap team members Jackie Carroll, Parry Eidsmoe, Beth Eischens, Chris Fox, Kevin George, and Chad Grande helped plant 25 seedlings with Brandon from Hubbard County and two eighth grade classes at Park Rapids Century School baseball fields.

Team Member News

Joining Itasca-Mantrap in May were two temporary seasonal apprentice linemen, Andrew Sandberg and Clay Eberhart.

Andrew Sandberg comes to Itasca-Mantrap from Skyline Utilities in Brainerd, MN where he was a fourth-step apprentice. Andrew graduated from Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Wadena with an Electrical Lineman diploma.

Clay Eberhart was an apprentice lineworker with Irby Construction/Okay Construction out of the Two Inlets/Park Rapids area. He has completed the first year in the apprenticeship program. Clay graduated from the Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Wadena with an Electrical Line Worker Technology degree.

Andrew and Clay will work with the Itasca-Mantrap linemen to install new services and maintain Itasca-Mantrap's overhead and underground lines.



Board Report: Meeting Highlights

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors for Itasca-Mantrap Co-op Electrical Ass'n. was held on Thursday, April 29, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at the Itasca-Mantrap office.

A quorum of directors was present.

Items discussed or Board action taken:

- Approved the consent agenda.
- Heard the Operations and Safety report and the Marketing and Member Services report
- March financials were received and filed subject to audit.
- CEO Christine Fox gave her monthly CEO report.
- Discussed the possibility of expanding the community solar garden.
- Reviewed the script and program for Itasca-Mantrap's 80th Annual Meeting on June 10, 2021.
- Adopted a resolution to certify the candidates for election to the Itasca-Mantrap Board of Directors.
- Appointed directors to serve on the Operation Round Up Trust Board.
- Heard quarterly reports for Board Expenses, Strategic Plan, Safety Incidents, Financial Ratios and Vegetation Management.
- Matt Laughlin, Brady Martz & Associates, P.C., reviewed the Cooperative's Independent Audit Report for years ended December 31, 2020 and 2019. The report was accepted as presented.
- Approved the disposition of obsolete equipment.
- Reviewed changes to administrative policies.
- Directors and CEO Christine Fox reported on meetings attended on behalf of the Cooperative.

The July meeting of the Board of Directors is Thursday, July 29, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.



APPS & AMPS

Let's talk watts! We invite you to join us at Clancy's Restaurant & Bar to enjoy delicious appetizers, and powerful conversation. Learn more about the benefits of being a member and receiving your power from Itasca-Mantrap Electric Cooperative.

DATE: Tuesday, August 10

TIME: 5:30 P.M.

WHERE: Clancy's Restaurant & Bar

RSVP by Monday, August 2 if you plan on attending.

Minnesota Law Recognizes Electricity's Benefits

A bill led by electric cooperatives to modernize and expand the state's energy conservation program for utilities was signed into law by Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz last month.

Receiving strong bipartisan support from both the House and Senate, the Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO) Act updates and expands the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP established energy savings requirements for all Minnesota utilities, including electric cooperatives, to realize annual energy savings equal to at least 1.5% of annual electricity sales and to spend at least 1.5% of their gross operating revenues on programs to achieve this goal.

Energy savings are typically achieved through member participation in energy savings programs such as energy audits and incentives for energy-efficiency improvements, like LED lighting and ENERGY STAR appliances. These services have allowed Great River Energy's members to attain more than 1 billion kilowatt-hours in energy savings over the years.

Since CIP was adopted in 2007, the landscape of the utility industry has changed dramatically — primarily the amount of renewable energy resources that have been added to the electric grid. For example, Great River Energy is transforming its power supply portfolio in ways that will result in more renewable resources, significantly lower emissions and reduced power supply costs.

To make CIP more relevant for today, a variety of stakeholders including Minnesota's electric cooperatives and other industry partners, introduced the ECO Act to help incentivize technologies and behaviors that lead to greater efficiency while also reducing emissions economy wide.

"Back when we first began our energy efficiency initiatives, we would say 'The cheapest and cleanest form of energy is the energy that is never used in the first place,'" said Jeff Haase, manager of member

services at Great River Energy. "But that's not the case anymore since we've added, and will continue to add, affordable renewable energy resources to our generation portfolio. We now encourage the smart use of electricity and the electrification of certain end-uses because it's become cleaner and remains cost-effective."

A main component of the ECO Act emphasizes total energy efficiency across several sectors (e.g., transportation, agriculture) rather than focusing solely on reducing electricity use. This allows cooperatives the flexibility to achieve their 1.5% reduction goal through programs that promote electrification technologies such as electric vehicles, electric storage water heaters and air source heat pumps.

"I am proud to sign this important energy legislation into Minnesota law," Walz said in a press release. "We know that investing in energy conservation and beneficial fuel switching means that Minnesota's homes and businesses run more efficiently and have a lower impact on our environment. The ECO Act will help Minnesota families and small businesses save money, create good-paying jobs, and, most importantly, protect Minnesota's environment for generations to come."

Another component of the bill removes the 1.5% spending requirement, unless the reduction in electricity use is not met, which will reduce consumers' total energy bills. These updates will not only benefit the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but they will foster a more resilient grid as well.

"Not only will the ECO Act benefit consumers' pocketbooks while contributing to Minnesota's conservation goals, but it also will increase and expand workforce opportunities all over the state," said Darrick Moe, president and CEO of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, which represents electric cooperatives. "This is a win-win-win for consumers, energy providers and all sectors of Minnesota."

CoBank Matches Operation Round Up® Donation for Four Organizations

CoBank, a member-owned provider of credit and financial services, matched four different Operation Round Up® donations through the “Sharing Success” program, which partners with cooperatives to match donations up to \$10,000. CoBank’s Sharing Success program doubled the contributions from Operation Round Up to help these charitable organizations succeed.

Carsonville Fire Department

Firefighters of Becker County, Townships of Osage, Carsonville, Pine Point, Two Inlets, Forest, Round Lake, and Shell will use these donations to upgrade and improve their rescue and extrication tools. Carsonville Fire Dept. received \$4,000 from Operation Round Up and an additional \$4,000 from CoBank. The donations will be spent on a battery-operated Ram for their new truck. The Ram will allow firefighters to cut apart vehicles involved in car crashes and assist in extrication.



Pictured: Michael Harvey, Nikki Torkelson.

Family Safety Network

Family Safety Network received \$2,500 from Operation Round Up and a \$2,500 matching donation from CoBank. These donations will be used towards the programs and services offered at Family Safety Network such as group sessions, financial education, legal advocacy, and individual advocacy. Family Safety Network supports victims of domestic violence and their families.



Pictured (L-R): Kayla Kinslow, Annette White, Heather Rogoscheske, and Nikki Torkelson.

Heartland Homes

Heartland Homes, Inc. is a non-profit charitable organization providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities in the Park Rapids area. The \$1,000 donation from Operation Round Up was matched by \$1,000 from CoBank. This donation will assist Heartland Homes in allowing their 63 clients the opportunity to get out and experience life through their choice of activities.



Pictured (L-R): Nikki Torkelson, Bill Simpson, Brian Christiansen, Carol Stachowski, Mike Wheeler, and Loni Dillon.

Park Rapids Fire Department

The Park Rapids Fire Department (PRFD) received a \$2,500 donation from Operation Round Up and was matched by \$2,500 from CoBank. The PRFD will use these donations to purchase a thermal imager. This project will keep members safe during firefighting operations as well as ensure the fire is fully extinguished by identifying any hotspots.



Pictured (L-R): Crystal Krautkremer, Nikki Torkelson.

The Itasca-Mantrap Operation Round Up Trust is primarily funded by members who allow their electric bills to be rounded up to the nearest dollar. Application deadlines are March 15 and September 15. The Operation Round Up Trust Board reviews applications received and authorizes disbursements to organizations that meet the qualifications.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

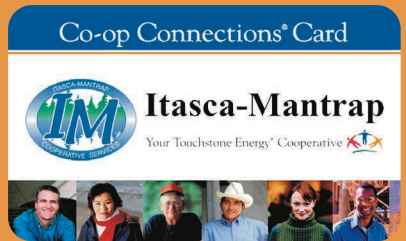
During summer months, run large appliances that emit heat (like clothes dryers and dishwashers) during the evening when it's cooler.

This will minimize indoor heat during the day when outdoor temperatures are highest.



Source: www.energy.gov

SMALL CARD, BIG SAVINGS.



Follow us to stay updated on the latest!



OFFICE CLOSED
MONDAY, JULY 5

SmartHub App

Manage your account with ease by using the SmartHub online and mobile app! Access detailed usage reports, billing & payment information, outage reporting, and many more handy features.



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1-800-252-1166
www.gopherstateonecall.org

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